

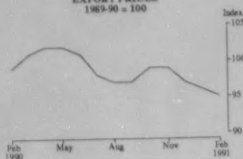
Statistics Weekly

Friday, 26 April 1991

The week in statistics ...

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EXPORT PRICES
1985=100



Export prices continue to fall

Export prices fell by 1.0 per cent between January and February 1991, putting them 4 per cent below the level of February 1990.

The main price decreases in February were for gold (reflecting falls in world prices), crude petroleum products and alumina.

These decreases were partly offset by increases in the prices of approximately 35 per cent of the items in the index. The main increases were for non crude petroleum products.

The table below shows the wide divergence in price changes for the major commodity groups.

EXPORT PRICES
FEBRUARY 1991
Percentage change

Commodity	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Mineral products	0.0	12.1
Base metals	0.0	1.1
Live animals and animal products	-1.0	0.0
Motor vehicles, aircraft and vessels	0.0	0.0
Products of chemicals or allied industries	-2.0	-1.0
Machinery and appliances	0.0	-2.0
Prepared foodstuffs	1.1	-11.9
Gold, diamonds and coin	-5.0	-12.8
Wool and cotton fibres	1.2	-16.2
Vegetable products	0.0	-30.4
<i>All exports</i>	-1.0	-4.0

For further information, order the publication Export Price Index, Australia (6405.0) or contact Peter Cordy on (06) 252 5541.

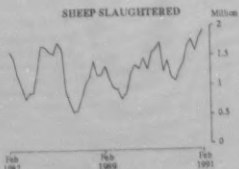
Sheep slaughterings continue to rise

Sheep slaughterings for human consumption continued to increase in February 1991 with a rise of 6.6 per cent over the exceptionally high figure for January. The February figure of 1,927,400 was 19.3 per cent higher than in the same month last year. In the eight months to February 1991 there were 17.6 per cent more sheep slaughtered than in the same period a year earlier.

Production of mutton was 40,911 tonnes in February 1991 which was 4.8 per cent higher than the previous month and 21.8 per cent up on February 1990.

Continued ...

SHEEP SLAUGHTERED



Production of all red meat in February 1991 (211,760 tonnes) increased by 4.6 per cent in original terms against January 1991 but decreased by 1.1 per cent seasonally adjusted. Lamb had the largest fall of 11.3 per cent in original terms, a decrease of 3.0 per cent seasonally adjusted.

**LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTERED
FEBRUARY 1991
Percentage change**

	From January 1991	From February 1990
Sheep	6.6	19.3
Pigs	2.6	0.5
Calves	-8.7	0.1
Chickens	-6.1	-5.2
Cattle	7.3	-6.9
Lambs	-12.8	-7.2

Receipts of taxable wool by brokers and dealers in February 1991 fell by 3.3 per cent in original terms and by 11.3 per cent seasonally adjusted, over January 1991. Compared with February 1990 there was a decrease of 8.7 per cent in original terms and 9.2 per cent seasonally adjusted.

For further information, order the publication *Livestock Products, Australia* (7215.0), or contact Cheryl Warry on (06) 252 5337.

Trend still falling for motor vehicle registrations

The trend estimate for new motor vehicle registrations fell by 2.2 per cent in February 1991, continuing the decline since April 1990. Car and station wagon registrations were down by 2.0 per cent while 'other' vehicles dropped by 2.8 per cent. Registrations were down by 1.9 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms (although there was a rise of 7.4 per cent in unadjusted registrations).

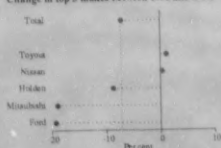
For the eight month period July 1990 to February 1991 there were 298,885 car and station wagon registrations, 5.6 per cent down on the 316,761 registered in the same period in 1989-90. The top five makes (Ford, Toyota, Holden, Nissan and Mitsubishi) accounted for 81.6 per cent of the registrations, 3.4 percentage points below the 85.0 per cent they contributed in 1989-90.

In contrast, the imported small car and station wagon makes Mazda, Daihatsu, Hyundai, Honda, Subaru and Suzuki accounted for 14.4 per cent of registrations in the eight months to February 1991, a 3.6 percentage point increase over the same period in 1989-90.

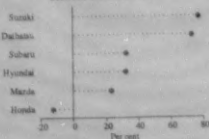
For further information, order the publication *Motor Vehicle Registrations, Australia* (9303.0), or contact Kevin Yeaton on (06) 252 6255.

**NEW MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS
FOR 8 MONTHS ENDED FEBRUARY**

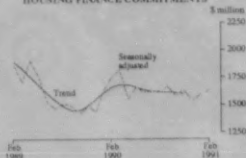
Change in top 5 makes between 1990 and 1991



Change in selected imported cars and station wagons between 1990 and 1991



HOUSING FINANCE COMMITMENTS



Housing finance value up but dwelling numbers down

Seasonally adjusted housing finance commitments for February 1991 were \$1,633.7 million, an increase of \$42.0 million (2.6%) over January 1991 but still \$113.5 million (6.5%) below February 1990.

Commitments for construction of dwellings increased marginally in February 1991 compared with January 1991, up \$0.8 million (0.3%); commitments for purchase of newly erected dwellings were up \$14.1 million (14.0%) and for purchase of established dwellings by \$27.1 million (2.3%).

HOUSING FINANCE, FEBRUARY 1991
VALUE OF COMMITMENTS
Seasonally adjusted

Purpose of commitment	\$ million	Percentage change	
		From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Purchase of newly erected dwellings	115.1	14.0	11.8
Purchase of established dwellings	1,227.9	2.3	-6.7
Construction of dwellings	290.7	0.3	-11.5
Total	1,633.7	2.6	-6.5

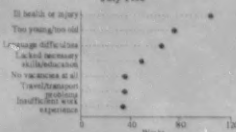
Despite the general increase in the value of commitments, the number of dwelling units fell in seasonally adjusted terms for both construction of dwellings, down 5.7 per cent (285 dwelling units) and purchase of established dwellings, down 0.8 per cent (132 dwelling units). There was an increase of 183 dwelling units (14.7%) in the purchase of newly erected dwellings category, yielding an overall decrease of 1.0 per cent in the number of dwelling units for which commitments were made.

HOUSING FINANCE COMMITMENTS
FEBRUARY 1991
Seasonally adjusted

Purpose of commitment	Number of dwellings	Percentage change	
		From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Purchase of newly erected dwellings	16,850	-0.8	-8.5
Purchase of established dwellings	4,701	-5.7	-19.1
Construction of dwellings	1,431	14.7	2.2
Total	22,982	-1.0	-10.3

Of the major lenders for housing, banks increased their commitments by \$40.6 million (3.6%) in February, while permanent building societies lent \$10.0 million (3.8%) less than in January. 'Other lenders' committed \$11.3 million (5.7%) more.

AVERAGE DURATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT
By selected main difficulties in finding work
July 1990



Job search experience — the pattern is changing

A belief that 'there were no vacancies at all' was most frequently reported as the main difficulty experienced by unemployed persons in finding work, in July 1990. Of the 548,300 persons looking for work, 17 per cent were in this category, and their average duration of unemployment was 36 weeks. The 'no vacancies' difficulty has declined from 28 per cent in July 1980.

After 'no vacancies at all', the next most common difficulty was 'considered too young or too old by employers'. This reason was given by 15 per cent of all unemployed persons.

These findings are among the results of an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey conducted in association with the regular monthly labour force survey in July 1990.

MAIN DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING WORK
1980 to 1990

Difficulty	July 1980	July 1988	July 1990
	— per cent —		
No vacancies at all	28	16	17
Considered too young/too old	13	17	15
Lacked necessary skills/education	8	12	13
Other	51	55	55
Total	100	100	100

The survey also showed:

- ☐ Over the last 10 years, the number of persons reporting 'lacked necessary skills/education' as their main difficulty in finding work has tended to increase. In July 1980 this estimate was 8 per cent, whereas in July 1990 it had increased to 13 per cent.
- ☐ Almost one half of the 83,900 persons who reported their main difficulty in finding work as 'considered too young or too old by employers' were aged 45 and over.
- ☐ 76 per cent of unemployed persons were registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service, of whom more than 9 in 10 were looking for full-time work.
- ☐ Persons without post-school qualifications had been unemployed for 11 weeks more on average than those with post-school qualifications (52 compared to 41 weeks).
- ☐ 23 per cent of unemployed persons had been unemployed for one year or more.

Overall, the average duration of current period of unemployment was 47 weeks, compared with 53 weeks in July 1988 and 31 weeks in July 1980.

For further information, order the publication *Job Search Experience of Unemployed Persons, Australia (6222.0)*, or contact Sue Doyle on (06) 252 7204.

Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- through its bookshops
- by mail order (including subscription)
- by facsimile
- electronically.

To order any of the publications that appear in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

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Suggestions

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

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(06) 252 6104

All the week's releases: 17 to 23 April

General

Corrigendum: Australian Standard Classification of Countries for Social Statistics (ASCCSS), 1990 (1269.0; free)

Pocket Year Book, Aust., 1991 (1302.0; \$7.50)

Monthly Summary of Statistics, Aust., April 1991 (1304.0; \$19.00)

Statistics Weekly, 18 April 1991 (1318.0; \$4.00)

Economic Indicators, Qld, April 1991 (1307.3; \$6.00)

Territory Business Indicators, April 1991 (1307.7; \$4.00)

Social statistics

Preschools and Child Care Centres, Qld, 1990 (4202.3; \$10.00) — *final issue*

National accounts, finance and foreign trade

Imports, Aust., Monthly Summary Tables, February 1991 (5433.0; \$9.00)

Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Aust., February 1991 (5609.0; \$10.00)

Finance Companies: Assets, Liabilities, Income and Expenditure, Aust., 1989-90 (5616.0; \$10.00) — *final issue*

Labour statistics and prices

Job Search Experience of Unemployed Persons, Aust., July 1990 (6222.0; \$11.50)

Export Price Index, Aust., February 1991 (6405.0; \$7.50)

Price Indexes of Copper Materials, Aust., March 1991 (6410.0; \$5.00)

Price Indexes of Materials Used in Coal Mining, Aust., February 1991 (6415.0; \$10.00)

Agriculture

Livestock and Livestock Products, Qld, 1989-90 (7221.3; \$15.00)

Secondary industry and distribution

Manufacturing Production, Aust., Clothing and Footwear, January 1991 (8358.0; \$10.00)

Manufacturing Production, Aust., Transport Equipment, February 1991 (8363.0; \$4.50)

Manufacturing Production, Aust., Metal Products, February 1991 (8367.0; \$5.50)

Manufacturing Production, Aust., Wood and Wood Products, February 1991 (8369.0; \$4.50)

Building Approvals — Private Sector, Perth Statistical Division, March 1991 (8732.5; \$3.50)

Building Activity, SA, December Qtr 1990 (8752.4; \$10.00)

Building Approvals, Tas., February 1991 (8731.6; \$9.50)

Building Activity, Tas., December Qtr 1990 (8752.6; \$8.00)

Building Activity, ACT, December Qtr 1990 (8752.8; \$10.00)

Transport

Motor Vehicle Registrations, Aust., February 1991 (9303.0; \$10.00)

Motor Vehicle Registrations, Tas., February 1991 (9303.6; \$5.00)

Calendar of key releases

Expected releases over the fortnight to 7 May 1991

April

- [24]** Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, February 1991 (6407.0; \$10.00)
Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, February 1991 (6408.0; \$7.50)
- [26]** Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, February 1991 (6412.0; \$10.00)
Manufacturing Production Australia, February 1991, Preliminary, (8301.0; \$10.00)
Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, March 1991, Preliminary, (9301.0; \$10.00)
- [30]** Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, February 1991 (6411.0; \$10.00)

May

- [2]** Building Approvals, Australia, March 1991 (8731.0; \$12.50)
- [6]** Balance of Payments, Australia, March 1991 (5301.0; \$15.00)

The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to
23 April 1991



Statistics Weekly
26 April 1991

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust
— Percentage change from same period previous year —									
New capital expenditure (Sept. qtr 90)*	-0.9	-10.9	5.4	11.2	-17.9	37.2	n.a.	n.a.	-3.4
Retail turnover (Feb. 91) (trend estimate)	3.4	-2.4	4.6	8.8	2.2	6.3	n.a.	9.5	2.8
New motor vehicle registrations (Feb. 91)†	-14.4	-25.6	-15.2	-20.6	-18.9	-24.3	-34.8	11.4	-18.3
Number of dwelling unit approvals (Feb. 91)	-7.8	-21.1	1.8	-7.4	-17.7	-9.0	-30.5	-54.1	-11.1
Value of total building work done (Dec. qtr 90)	2.5	-11.1	-23.0	9.8	-25.5	-24.7	11.4	5.3	-8.5
Employed persons (March 91)*	-0.4	-4.0	-1.5	-0.1	-1.8	-0.3	-0.5	5.3	-1.6
Capital city consumer price index (Dec. qtr 90)	6.4	7.4	6.2	7.5	7.4	6.1	7.1	6.8	6.9
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time) (November 90)	6.8	7.1	9.9	8.3	7.9	6.6	9.4	8.7	7.5
Population (Sept. 90)	1.1	1.4	2.4	1.1	2.3	1.1	0.9	2.5	1.5
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc (Sept. qtr 90)	3.2	0.1	6.5	1.8	0.8	23.5	7.4	20.9	4.2

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT

Key national indicators - consolidated to 23 April 1991

				Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
				Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
Period							
National production							
Gross domestic product	— current prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 90	101,082	95,247	1.3	3.4
	— 1984-85 prices	"	"	70,031	64,725	0.6	0.6
Industrial activity							
New capital expenditure	— current prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 90	7,305	6,612	3.2	-10.6
	— 1984-85 prices	"	"	5,542	5,021	3.6	-10.3
Expected new capital expenditure		"	Three months to Dec. 90	8,311	n.a.	n.a.	-5.7
Retail turnover	— current prices	"	February 91	6,365	7,250	0.1	3.5
	— 1984-85 prices	"	Dec. qtr 90	16,480	14,620	-1.6	-1.6
New motor vehicle registrations (e)		no.	February 91	39,405	43,550	-0.9	-18.3
Dwelling unit approvals		"	February 91	9,860	10,474	-2.9	-11.2
Value of all building approvals		\$m	"	1,915	2,212	32.6	-3.4
Value of total building work done	— current prices	"	Dec. qtr 90	7,391	7,069	0.5	-8.5
	— 1984-85 prices	"	"	4,654	4,452	0.1	-10.9
Manufacturers' sales	— current prices	"	Dec. qtr 90	36,754	35,064	1.0	-1.0
	— 1984-85 prices	"	"	25,318	24,194	0.0	-3.0
Expected manufacturers' sales		"	Six months to June 91	70,139	n.a.	n.a.	-1.8
Labour							
Employed persons		'000	March 91	7,746.5	7,710.1	-1.1	-1.6
Unemployment rate †		%	"	9.6	9.2	0.5	3.0
Participation rate †		"	"	63.8	63.2	-0.4	-0.1
Job vacancies		'000	November 90	34.1	35.4	-27.8	-45.6
Average weekly overtime per employee		hours	"	1.3	1.3	-1.9	-16.2
Prices, profits and wages							
Consumer price index	1980-81 = 100.0		Dec. qtr 90	214.5	n.a.	2.7	6.9
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industries	1984-85 = 100.0		January 91	125.6	n.a.	-2.5	5.4
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry (e)	1988-89 = 100.0		January 91	111.9	n.a.	-0.8	5.1
Company profits before income tax		\$m	Dec. qtr 90	4,640	3,911	15.9	4.8
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adults; ordinary time)		\$	November 90	555.60	n.a.	2.7	7.5
Interest rates (b) (monthly average)							
90-day bank bills †	% per annum		March 91	11.60	n.a.	-0.05	-3.85
10-year Treasury bonds †	"		"	11.40	n.a.	0.15	-2.05
Balance of payments							
Exports of merchandise		\$m	February 91	4,271	4,452	4.8	6.6
Imports of merchandise		"	"	3,981	4,274	1.6	4.6
Balance on merchandise trade (c)		"	"	290	178	323.8	97.8
Balance of goods and services (c)		"	"	218	-75	62.0	62.9
Balance on current account (c)		"	"	-1,230	-1,434	12.8	0.3
Terms of trade (d)	1984-85 = 100.0		Dec. qtr 90	n.a.	97.9	-3.8	-9.3
Foreign investment							
Net foreign debt		\$m	30 Dec. 90	130,771	n.a.	1.9	6.7
Net foreign liabilities		"	"	172,363	n.a.	0.4	5.6
Exchange rates (monthly average)							
US\$	per SA		February 91	0.7843	n.a.	0.7	3.2
Trade weighted index	May 1970 = 100.0		"	57.3	n.a.	-0.5	-2.2
Other indicators							
Population (resident at end of qtr)		million	Sept. 90	17.1	n.a.	0.4	1.5
Overseas visitor arrivals		'000	October 90	191	188	-1.4	12.9

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) Later figures expected to be released Friday, 26 April 1991.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 6).

Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

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